



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

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For Immediate Release

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FIRST DAY OF SUMMER TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE IN EXTREME TEMPERATURES

(MADISON, June 21, 2005) – As temperatures peak during this first week of summer, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services is issuing tips for keeping cool and safe during extreme weather.

“As summer begins, the warmth and sunshine draw more people outdoors for recreation or other activities, but the heat and humidity can be dangerous for our more vulnerable citizens,” said Stephanie Marquis, Communications Director for the Department. “The first day of summer is the perfect time of the year to focus on how we can protect ourselves in extreme temperatures.”

If you experience dizziness, headache, muscle cramps, weakness, nausea or vomiting, get cool or ask someone for help.

Call 9-1-1 immediately for chest pains, confusion, shortness of breath, hot/dry skin or if the person becomes unconscious.

People at higher risk of a heat related illness include:

- Older adults
- Infants and young children
- People with chronic heart or lung problems
- People with disabilities
- Overweight persons
- Those who work outdoors or in hot settings
- Users of some medications, especially those taken for mental disorders, movement disorder, allergies, depression, and heart or circulatory problems
- People that are isolated who don't know when or how to cool off – or when to call for help

Tips on how to be safe during hot weather:

1. **Never leave children, disabled persons, or pets in a car – even briefly.** Temperatures in a car can become life threatening within minutes.
2. **Keep your living space cool.** Cover windows to keep the sun from shining in. If you don't have an air conditioner, open windows to let air circulate. When it's hotter than 95 degrees, use fans to blow hot air out of the window, rather than to blow hot air on to your body. Basements

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or ground floors are often cooler than upper floors.

3. **Slow down and limit physical activity.** Plan outings or exertion for the early morning or after dark, when temperatures are cooler.
4. **Drink plenty of water and eat lightly.** Don't wait for thirst, but instead drink plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid alcohol or caffeine and stay away from hot, heavy meals.
5. **Infants should drink breast milk or formula to get the right balance of water, salts, and energy.** You may also supplement your infant's fluids with an additional 4 to 8 ounces of water per day, but don't dilute the formula unless instructed to do so by your doctor.
6. **Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light colored clothing.** Add a hat or umbrella to keep your head cool...and don't forget sunscreen!
7. **Don't stop taking medication unless your doctor says you should.** Take extra care to stay cool, and ask your doctor or pharmacist for any special heat advice.

Easy ways to cool off include a cool, but not cold, bath or shower which actually works faster than an air conditioner. Applying cold wet rags to the neck, head and limbs also cools down the body quickly.

Summer heat waves have been the biggest weather-related killers in Wisconsin for the past 50 years, far exceeding tornado and other storm-related deaths. On average, five people in Wisconsin die each year as a result of extreme heat and humidity. Earlier this month, a 2-year-old West Allis girl died tragically after being left in a van for several hours while temperatures outside reached 81 degrees.

For additional information on heat related health and safety, visit the Department of Health and Family Services website <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/Disaster/Heat.htm>.

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